

## WISE OR FOOLISH

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### MATTHEW 7:24-27

For the past three Sundays we have been challenged by our Lord to serve him (Josh. 24:14-15), to understand what being “born again” means (Jn. 3:1-7; 16-17), and why we must be born again (Jn. 3:7; 16-18). Now the question is, “Are you wise or foolish?”

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus painted some very vivid, word pictures. The “therefore” of v. 24 refers to vv. 13-23. Jesus confronts us with two possibilities: the wide road and gate or narrow road and gate (vv. 13-14); bearing good or bad fruit (vv. 15-23); and finally, being a wise or foolish builder.

Each of these pictures contains a word of warning to be sure you have made the wise decision. Choose Jesus or the world. To choose Jesus is to build your spiritual house and stake your eternity on the solid rock.

To choose the world is to stake your life and future on shifting sands that cannot support, and will destroy you. Read vv. 24-27 and remember, you are one or the other of these two people.

### Similarities of the two builders:

#### 1. Both heard Jesus (see key vv. 24 & 26)

“Everyone who hears these words of mine” applies to both the wise man and the foolish man. Both have sat in church. Both heard the Gospel preached. Both know the way of salvation.

#### 2. Both have the same desire.

Both want the same thing—a house that will last. Both want a place to comfortably live with their families and enjoy themselves.

### 3. Both build in the same locality.

Both houses were pummeled by the same storm and subjected to the same stresses and tests.

### 4. Both houses looked substantial.

From all outward appearances the houses looked like they would last a long time. The doors, the window, the chimneys were all the same. The materials used were the same. They both looked like great houses, substantial and long-lasting.

### 5. Both were convinced their house would stand.

Both built thinking they were building for the future. Each had every expectation their house was secure. Yes, they had much in common.

## Differences between the two builders:

1. Only one anchored his house to a solid foundation.

The foolish man didn't bother with a foundation at all. He was in a hurry. He didn't trouble himself with laying a good foundation.

A foolish man is foolish because he knows about God; he just doesn't have time for God. He knows that God's word and plan of salvation are eternal. But he is impatient and only interested in short cuts and quick results.

We are especially aware of what the earthquake in Haiti on the 12th did to houses and buildings. They were poorly build—not anchored nor reinforced

Another earthquake struck Coalinga, California on May 2, 1983. Fortunately no one was killed, but 94 were injured, some severely. The 8-block downtown area was almost completely destroyed, except for superficial damage to the Bank of America and to Guarantee Savings and Loan. What was different about them?

Both Bank of America and the Savings and Loan were well anchored and built. But the buildings that were not anchored to a strong foundation and with reinforced walls were severely damaged or destroyed.

This is the picture Jesus paints with his words. The foolish builder figured he knew all he needed to know. He didn't need to anchor his building to anything solid.

Spiritually, a foolish person only reads the Bible superficially, maybe when the preacher is preaching on Sunday morning. A foolish person believes that Sunday School is for kids. A foolish person lets someone else serve and give money to support the work.

2. Only one desired to build the right way.

The wise man is anxious to know the right way to do things, so he listens and studies the blueprints. Not the foolish man! He can't be bothered with plans and blueprints and foundations. He considers them unnecessary. He thinks he knows best.

The foolish man didn't think things through. He didn't stop to consider the eventualities and possibilities. He didn't think to himself, "Now, what might happen if that pleasant looking river becomes swollen and overflows its banks?"

The foolish man is the kind of person who is not interested in church traditions, in church history and Bible history, and especially he is not interested in what the Bible has to say.

3. Only one built a home that would last.

Spiritually, a wise person has a great desire to build a life that will last. A wise person wants to build a life that will carry him into eternity where he will hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

To that end his attitude is, "Well, I don't know much about this. I need to examine the plans and specifications of the Master Architect; I need guidance and instruction."

A foolish man is always too busy, too distracted, too involved in non-essential things. Lay a solid foundation? Who has time for that when the golf course beckons, the lake calls, or sleeping in entices.

Am I a wise or foolish builder?

Two types of individuals: the wise man who hears the words of Jesus and puts them into practice, and the foolish man who hears the same words but does not put them into practice. Which are you?

The frightening thing is what they have in common: They both tend to be in the same place. You might find both of them in church, sitting and listening to the same Gospel. They seem to want the same things.

Look at v. 21. The pseudochristian, says, "Lord, Lord," but Jesus says, "I never knew you." He believed everything was okay. He was looking for peace; he wants to go to heaven.

He is looking for guidance and a way out of troubles and difficulties. He tries to live a good life; he looks for spiritual power in his life.

This is what is so alarming. He or she wants all these things but is not willing to build their life on the solid foundation of Christ. Look at these two men and their strange similarities.

Not only do they seem to want the same things, but they seem to have the same things. As we look from the outside their houses are identical. But one is safely anchored to the Rock, the other one is not, yet he believes it is safe. To build on sand is:

Building upon human opinions, wrong attitudes, and selfish wills. To build on the sand is to build on self—self-will, self-satisfaction, self-fulfillment, self-sufficiency, self-purpose. To build on sand is to pay more attention to your peers than to God's Word.

To build on the sand is to be unteachable and uncaring about the things of God and His church and about others. To build your house on the sand is to listen to the ultimate deception of Satan, which is to make a person believe he is saved when he is not.

Storms of life are unexpected. There is little value in a house, no matter how luxurious and comfortable it may be, if it collapses when the storms come and the floods begin to beat upon it. [Crooked Creek, Harrison, AR, May 7, 1961; Bob Reynolds, owner of Walter's Dry Goods; collapse of Ark Tire & Supply).

As long as the sun was shining everything seems hunky-dory. But when the sun is shining you could live in a tent. Luaine and I lived in a tent for a while BC (before children). But we didn't want to spend the winter in it.

When storms of life come you need a well-anchored spiritual house; you need a faith that will take care of you through those storms and into eternity itself.

Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice. . . ." You are being required to give yourself a self-examination today. Am I the wise or foolish builder. Let me ask you some questions:

## 1. Do you read the Bible?

Are you a student of the Bible? Where else are you going to find the words of God for you? Are you concerned about the message of the Bible, or is it just too much trouble to study the Word of God?

## 2. Do you examine your life in light of God's Word?

Do you constantly examine your life, your motives your actions, your speech, in light of the whole counsel of the Word of God. One of the characteristics of the foolish builder is that he just picks and chooses what he wants and likes, and ignores the rest.

### 3. Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness (6:33)?

Is serving Christ your priority? Do you support the church? Jesus died for the Church, you know! Do you participate in the activities of the church with your time, with your service, with your attendance, and with your money?

### 4. Does your walk reflect your talk?

Are you the wise builder or the foolish builder in this story? Jesus never says that we must do certain things in order to be saved.

No, salvation comes only by accepting the gift of Jesus Christ as your Savior. He is not even teaching sinless perfection. What Jesus teaches is, first you anchor yourself to the rock of Jesus by accepting him as your Savior.

And secondly, true faith always begins to show itself in the life of a person—what he or she says and does. If you say you have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, you lie, and do not know the truth. James, in his letter, sums up so perfectly . . . “Faith without works is dead.”

“Whoever hears these words of mine and puts them into practice” . . . The only validation we can ever have of salvation is a life of obedience. The house that is built upon the rock is a life of obedience.

It is a life with a biblical world view . . . it is a life with a divine view of Scripture, and is concerned with internal righteousness. It has a godly attitude toward what is said and done, and toward motives, things, money, and other people.

It is a life that empties itself of self-righteousness and pride, and is very aware of its own sin and makes every effort to enter the narrow gate and to be faithful in the narrow walk of Christ.

What’s this have to do with us? The opportunities for this church family in this new church year are great. God has blessed us in so many ways. There is a core of wise builders here who know the future is in God’s hands.

They see Him at work and they willingly join themselves to that work.

There are others who are foolish, looking for a “feel-good” religion that doesn’t expect or require obedience. What is frightening is you may be sitting next to one another right now.

You both have heard the word. What is your response? Are you a wise or a foolish builder. No excuses! The decision is yours.

The wise person hears the words of Christ and puts them into practice. First of all by believing in Him and accepting Him as your Savior. Secondly, through obedience to His Word.

## Application:

Every one of us is either the wise individual building our lives and future upon the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or we are like the foolish man, building our lives upon the shifting sands of our own opinions, unwilling to act upon the words of Jesus Christ and the scriptural principles of life found in the pages of the Bible. Which are you—foolish or wise?

Examine yourself today. Look at your life. The foolish man did not consider tomorrow. He didn't think at all about what might happen. When the storm came it was too late. He lost everything and went into eternity without Christ.